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Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament

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Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Annex

Information received from Governments

India

[Original: English]
[17 September 1999]

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73 of 4 December 1998 and the note verbale of 9 March 1999 from the Secretary-General drawing the attention of Member States to that resolution.

2. Resolution 53/73, entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", was sponsored by India, along with 17 other Member States. The resolution addresses an issue of importance to the international community and in particular to the developing countries.

3. India has given detailed consideration to the report of the Secretary-General of 28 July 1998 (A/53/202) on the subject, which is a useful update of his earlier report of 17 October 1990 (A/45/568). The 1998 report cited specific examples in the fields of nuclear technology, space technology, materials technology, information technology and biotechnology to highlight the fact that the application of advances in science and technology in the military field was a continuing phenomenon. The dual-use nature of those technologies was an added factor of significance to be kept in mind. Though the report did not include a concluding section, its substantive sections only reconfirmed the conclusion of the 1990

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report, which underlined that the international community must remain seized of the issue if it is to find ways of allowing technology the freedom to develop and yet at the same time ensure that technological advances promote rather than place at risk international peace and security in the years ahead.

4. Access to scientific and technological advances for developmental purposes remains a priority issue for developing countries. In fact, such access is an impetus for economic growth and can have a positive impact on global trade. At the same time the developing world has had to pay a developmental cost in view of the persistence of discriminatory control regimes that in effect are no more than exclusive groupings of countries that limit the exchanges of such technologies among themselves while denying access to others who may require them for developmental purposes. Those regimes are often non-economic barriers to normal trade and go against the generally accepted principles of global economic relations.

5. Exclusive export control policies were initiated to address proliferation concerns at a time when there were no global agreements that comprehensively addressed the issue. Questions have arisen as to whether such exclusive arrangements with limited membership have been truly effective in achieving their stated purpose of strengthening the international non-proliferation regime, especially with regard to scientific and technological applications connected with advanced weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

6. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction[a] — the first multilateral disarmament agreement of a universal character eliminating a complete class of weapons of mass destruction — offered an opportunity to put in place a multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory legal mechanism that would simultaneously address proliferation concerns emanating from unregulated transfers while at the same time promoting the economic development of States parties. The Chemical Weapons Convention placed an obligation on States parties to review their export policies as measures that they take to prevent the spread of chemical materials and equipment for purposes contrary to the objectives of the Convention. However, the persistence of certain ad hoc control regimes — creating a dual category of States parties to the Convention — stresses the need for early implementation of all provisions of the Convention to safeguard its long-term viability and effectiveness.

7. The ongoing negotiations for an effective protocol to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction of 1972 (resolution 2826 (XXVI), annex) provides the States parties with an opportunity to put in place an effective system of regulation of transfers of agents, toxins, equipment and technologies relevant to the Convention while avoiding measures that hamper the economic development of States parties. The negotiations should also benefit from the lessons learned from the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention since its entry into force.

8. The lack of a genuinely non-discriminatory universal agreement regarding nuclear weapons has also reduced the effectiveness of non-proliferation efforts in the nuclear field. Nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects cannot be divorced from the need for measures that promote nuclear disarmament and the progressive elimination of nuclear weapons. Absence of a disarmament benchmark renders nuclear non-proliferation difficult not only to implement but also to measure.

9. India has consistently maintained that proliferation concerns regarding materials and technologies related to advanced weapons systems, weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory agreements that are transparent and open to universal participation. The reflection of that principle in multilateral disarmament agreements would not only improve their effectiveness but also create an added impetus for their universality. The Conference on Disarmament could benefit from consideration of the issue, possibly through a special coordinator appointed by the Conference for the purpose.

10. At the national level, India's export control regime is a policy of long-standing consensus based upon internal policy considerations rather than any membership in exclusive international regimes. India's unblemished track record in the field of non-proliferation is demonstrated by the fact that it has not sought to export weapons of mass destruction or missile technologies for whatever purposes.

11. There is thus no divergence between India's national policy objectives and the ostensible objectives of multilateral export control regimes. However, closer interaction and harmonization of those regimes require that India's civilian programmes no longer be targeted and subjected to discriminatory export controls. India, conscious of the responsibilities arising from its possession of advanced technologies, is also committed to exercising those responsibilities in a manner that enhances global security. India is prepared to engage constructively, in non-confrontational and non-prescriptive settings, to harmonize national, regional and international mechanisms and regimes with the twin objectives of strengthening non-proliferation and the need to avoid hampering the economic development of States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements.

12. With regard to specific recommendations under paragraph 4 of resolution 53/73, the Secretary-General is requested to consider the appointment of a panel of governmental experts to advise him on the possible approaches to multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and of high technologies with military applications in a report to be submitted to the General Assembly no later than the fifty-sixth session.

Notes

[a] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 27* (A/47/27), appendix I.